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Senate Democrats Fight to Secure Funding for Vital Public Safety Services

Proposed measure would increase funding to local police and fire by 4%

LANSING - As the Michigan Senate voted on 2009 budget bills today, Senate Democrats fought to increase funding for local public safety services that keep Michigan communities and families safe. Sen. Glenn Anderson (D-Westland) sponsored an amendment that would restore a four percent increase in revenue sharing for local police, firefighters, water systems, road maintenance and other vital services.

“Safe cities are not only important for the families who live here, but also those who are looking to move here,” said Sen. Anderson. “Under-funded police and fire departments are dangerous for our communities, and detrimental to the growth of our economy, and that’s why I have and will continue to push to fund these invaluable public safety services.”

The Legislature has cut \$3 billion for these services over the last few years, resulting in 4,000 fewer police and firefighters in Michigan since 2001. The Michigan Commission on Law Enforcement Standards recently released a report stating arrests are down, violent crime is rising, and Michigan citizens are waiting longer than ever for police assistance due to understaffing caused by these cuts. Last week mayors, police chiefs, and fire chiefs from across the state came to the Capitol to plead for support of the Senate Democrats’ proposed increase in public safety funding.

“We have been forced to cut our budgets year after year and provide the same services with less. We have done this, but we can’t do it for much longer,” said Holland Mayor Al McGeehan, president of the Michigan Association of Mayors. “Additional cuts will continue to threaten public safety, our ability to plow and repair streets, and other services residents expect and deserve.”

“On Monday we celebrated Memorial Day, and we cheered and waved for our police and fire departments as they participated in parades and festivities to thank them for their work,” said Sen. Deb Cherry (D-Burton). “Yet today, some of my colleagues were willing to cut funding for these services. This is not the way to show our gratitude for the protection these brave men and women provide our families on a daily basis.”

The Senate Democrats were joined by the Michigan Association of Mayors, the Michigan Municipal League, and the Michigan Association of Chiefs of Police in support

of legislation to increase revenue sharing for public safety services.

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